

Request Concerning Needs within Next Two to Six Months.—We feel free to state, under existing conditions, that we do not understand how it will be possible to transfer 900 California Doctors of Medicine from civilian to military status within the next 60 days, i.e., before August 20, 1942.

That, however, does not make the urgency of the need one whit less than actually exists, and it may be assumed that the California Procurement and Assignment Service, acting through the California Chairman, Dr. Harold A. Fletcher of San Francisco (in charge of procurement for the Northern portion of California), and his Associate Chairman, Dr. Edward M. Pallette, of Los Angeles (charged with the responsibility of supervision and coordination of efforts of component county groups in the Southern section of the State), will do all within their power to promote the objectives of the Federal Procurement and Assignment Service.

Certainly, it must be agreed by all members of the Medical Profession that prompt surveys and alignments are now in order, if our Country's Manpower Commission, appointed by President Roosevelt, is to be supplied with the medical personnel so urgently needed for the tasks immediately ahead.

PROPOSED BASIC SCIENCE INITIATIVE FOR CALIFORNIA

California Has Needed a Basic Science Law for Many Years.—For many years, since 1927 in fact, and in these editorial pages, the need of a Basic Science Law, through which the health of the citizens of California would be protected from the services of licensed healing-art practitioners, who do not possess adequate preliminary and other education, and who through improper licensure, otherwise might be called upon to administer to the needs of sick and injured citizens of the State, has been repeatedly commented on.*

Since 1927, as stated, a program of education has been consistently carried on by the California Medical Association, during which period two separate Assembly bills were presented at Sacramento; as try-outs, to learn the reaction on legislative measures through which there might be brought into being in our State, a qualifying certificate board by name, "Basic Science Board," from which would be required a certificate on primary or fundamental education from every applicant for a healing-art certificate, before he or she could be eligible to take an examination by any one of several healing-art boards now existing in California. Therefore, it should be of special interest to all Doctors of Medicine in California to learn that the proposed Basic Science Initiative, sponsored by the California Medical Association, the California State Dental Association, the Southern California State Dental Association,

and the Public Health League of California, will actually find a place upon the November, 1942, ballot as one of several initiatives and measures then to be favorably or unfavorably voted upon. Note:—On the ballot, the Basic Science Initiative will have Number 3. Do not forget the number (3).

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Basic Science Initiative will be on November Ballot: Then What?—This last statement concerning possible non-approval by the voters of California is made with a triple purpose:

(1) To permit the members of the California Medical Association to know that their Basic Science Initiative will be on the November, 1942, ballot;

(2) To inform them that the invidious and confusing "Basic Subjects Act"*, sponsored by certain Chiropractic groups, will not be on the ballot—not a single county in California having presented Chiropractic petitions to the Secretary of State. (Whether these are being held back for some future years, is not known at this time);

(3) To acquaint members of the California Medical Association concerning the heavy work and tasks yet to be done.

It may be well for non-sectarian practitioners of the healing-art, i.e., those of us who call ourselves regular Doctors of Medicine, to reflect for a few minutes on certain principles to which our own group of non-sectarians have always given allegiance.

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Some of Our Tenets.—For, speaking of ourselves, we may state:

(a) We approach the practice of healing-art with open minds, and without preconceived notions or dogmas concerning the causation or course of diseases or injuries; and according to our teachings, we are permitted to use anything and everything that may make for the prevention or cure of disease or injury, so long as its administration does not promote personal or group profit or aggrandizement to the detriment of the public health.

(b) We decry and oppose, as unscientific and irrational, the postulates of all healing-art practitioners, no matter to whose group or cult they belong, who espouse or promote, before the public, those healing-art methods that are a contradiction to common sense or other logic.

(c) We believe, and hope that our lay fellows also hold, that every healing-art practitioner, no matter to what group he or she may belong, who himself stands before the public as a healing-art practitioner, and licensed by the State as such, shall and must possess at least a minimum preliminary education, to indicate that when he pursues his professional training, he shall have at his disposal a background of basic or primary knowledge, that will permit State Licensing

* For those who wish references, see CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, issue of August, 1941, on page 104.

* For photostatic copies of misleading allurements, see CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, April, 1942, on pages 228-229.

Boards in the Healing-Arts certain assurance, that no matter what be his views concerning treatment measures, he shall still have had sufficient fundamental or preliminary education to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the nature, course and treatment of human diseases and injuries.

In other words, bluntly put, and in reverse, the great State of California, has no right to place in the care of *incompetent* practitioners of the healing-art, the health and lives of its citizens. If life is sacred, as our many criminal laws suggest, why should it not be safeguarded, likewise, from incompetent practitioners? It is quite true, that legislatures not infrequently, in response to specious pleas, do enact improper licensure regulations—these in spite of the protests of scientific medicine;—but such action is largely a reflection on all who are guilty of such acts, and must not be cast in reproach upon those who protested the submitted legislation.

In making these statements, there is no vindictiveness. Not to portray these fundamental facts, would be a betrayal of patent and inviolate precepts.

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Tentative Conclusions.—To what, now, do the foregoing and similar thoughts lead us, in so far as the proposed Basic Science Initiative is concerned:

The answer is: To nothing more than this, namely, that:

(a) A Basic Science Initiative will be placed on the California Ballot non-retroactive for all practitioners of the healing-art now licensed, but applicable to applicants of the days to come; and

(b) The real struggle for the enactment into law in November, 1942, of this proposed initiative is now in the lap of the Medical Profession of California, and of the friends of that profession.

We, ourselves, placed it there. There it will remain, for better or for worse. If, at this time we each, and all of us, fail to do our respective parts, the end-result may be nothing else than the non-enactment of the initiative by the electorate, implying by that, not only disaster for the present, but also, for many years in the future.

True, these may be unpleasant thoughts. Better said, however, in advance, than afterward. It is important that every Doctor of Medicine in California, should fully appreciate his personal responsibility in the issues at stake.

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Recapitulation.—To place the proposition bluntly, let us recapitulate:

(1) Since the year 1927, a Basic Science Law has been consistently advocated in California.

(2) Two trial ballots were submitted in the California Legislature, in an effort to learn the sources of possible opposition.

(3) The initiative law is the only method that would make such a measure applicable to existing

healing-art groups already recognized by the State of California (so-called Regulars, Osteopaths, and Chiropractors.)

(4) The Basic Science Law sponsored by the California Medical Association, the State Dental Associations, and the Public Health League will be on the November, 1942, ballot.

(5) In spite of their high pressure methods, the effort to have a "Basic Subjects Law," as proposed by certain Chiropractic groups, died "aborning."

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Real Battle for a Basic Science Law is Still Ahead.—But, in spite of all the above:

The Real Battle is now about to start.

Let there be no doubt about that.

Keep in mind, those of you who were in the superoptimistic group at previous C.M.A. annual sessions, and told how easy it would be to secure 200,000 or more of valid names of voters, that after a very strenuous campaign, with many legal workers, a total of only 107,000 valid signatures were secured from doctors, dentists and their friends.* The other signatures, between that number and up and beyond the 212,117 needed, were obtained through commercial solicitors, for cash, and on which the regulation fee of ten cents plus was paid. The money so expended ran into some thousands of dollars. This is stated simply to emphasize how, on matters concerned with public health, i.e., on non-personal interests, we are willing so often to let the other fellow do the work; and, sad to relate, if failure results, we who have been derelict ourselves, are prone to cast reflections, not on ourselves, but more often on the "Other Fellow," or, easier still, on the "Officers of the Association," who supposedly did not do their part. Such is human nature!

In placing the matter so frankly, and in form, perhaps, almost to arouse antagonism, our sole motive is to attract sufficient attention to make members of the California Medical Profession—and through them, their friends and supporters—realize that the Real Fight for the enactment of this Basic Science Initiative is still ahead of us.

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Chances of Initiatives in a State Election.—

A brochure, "The Initiative and Referendum in California," from the John R. Haynes Foundation of Los Angeles (it was the late John R. Haynes, M.D., of Los Angeles who was the sponsor of the California Initiative), states:

... From the adoption of Direct Legislation in California in 1912 until 1938, ninety-nine initiative propositions have been submitted to the electorate, of which forty-one were statutes. . . . Of the initiatives voted on, twelve statutes have been approved by the electorate. . . .

The above statement is worthy of thought because it indicates that it is more than four to one that a "statute initiative" (and that is the class to which the Basic Science Initiative belongs) will be voted down!

* Of the 107,000 signatures so secured, 70,000 were valid.

Now these were all patent facts before we engaged upon this struggle to protect the citizens from incompetent healing-art practitioners. What do these facts imply?

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The Task Ahead: What Shall the Story be? Victory or Defeat? And Upon Whom Must the Responsibility Rest?—Is it not plainly evident, from what has been here presented, that the Basic Science Initiative, promoted and intended for the protection of the citizens of California, will be enacted only if the voters of California appreciate its beneficent purposes?

At the present time, the struggle is even more difficult, because with War psychology everywhere in evidence, it may be said there is only transient or casual interest in State and local politics. Meaning what? That, by-and-large, the voters will go into the booths in November next, and vote No rather than Yes, on initiatives, referendum and similar measures. These are the cold facts, based on the recorded analyses of initiative measures submitted since the year 1912. To ignore them, lays the groundwork for defeat. And then, what?

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The Objective is Laudible. But Doctors of Medicine and Their Clients and Friends Have a Hard Fight Ahead.—The battle can be won and it will be won for the betterment of California's citizens, if every Doctor of Medicine will do his part and lend his fullest aid, through himself and his friends, to carry on, between now and November election day, a strenuous campaign of education of all voting citizens.

This means, the educational campaign must be carried on in good part by physicians; through direct conversations with their patients and friends, and contacts with service clubs, and other groups with which they have affiliations. It envisages coöperation by members of the State Woman's Auxiliary and its component county groups, by Doctors of Dentistry, Pharmacists, and other learned professions.

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The Story to be Told.—The story to be told is so simple, so honest, and so fundamental, that, in essence, it is as follows:

The State of California should license only those practitioners of the healing-art—no matter to what school belonging—who have given evidence through examination, that they possess sufficient fundamental education to indicate that health and lives of citizens may be safely placed in their care, and that they are, therefore, worthy as applicants for State Licensure.

And primarily, that is all a Basic Science Law is intended to promote. Surely, every citizen has an interest in that kind of protection for himself and for those whom he loves.

If we can get this basic message across, success

will be ours. If we, as physicians, fail to educate our fellows concerning their own primary interests, and our own kindly desire to aid in their protection, we may go down to defeat. This in spite of all past effort and funds expended in sincere desire to place this law on the statute books of California.

Doctor, you who read this, will you do your part?

ANNUAL SESSION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION: A.M.A. TO MEET IN SAN FRANCISCO IN 1943

Some High-Lights of Recent A.M.A. Session.—The recent annual session of the American Medical Association, held in Atlantic City on June 8-12, was characterized by interest and enthusiasm, so much in evidence at this year's convention of the California Medical Association held at Del Monte, on May 3-6, last. Registrations of A.M.A. members in eighteen scientific sections totaled 8328, some 180 physicians from California being in attendance.

The Section meetings were interesting, but special mention must be made of the Scientific Exhibits which, more and more, are taking on a dominating place at the annual meetings of the National Association. The great interest of physicians in the newer researches and work, as given in these exhibits, was evidenced by the unending and attentive groups which crowded practically all the booths. Certainly, this type of post-graduate work is having much appeal to that increasing number of physicians who wish to contact and exchange views with colleagues whose work is not only thought-stimulating, but valuable in practice.

In this connection, the hope is expressed that members of the California profession will lend fuller coöperation in building up the scientific exhibits of our own State Association. Praise should be given, also, to the medical and surgical films which were presented in Atlantic City. The rooms allocated for these were constantly crowded.

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San Francisco, as Meeting Place, Was Decided in 1940.—New York was selected as the place for A.M.A. session, to be held in 1945, three years hence; just, as in 1940, the A.M.A. House of Delegates decided that San Francisco should be the place of meeting for 1943, next year's session.

For a brief period, by the underground, it was rumored about that hotel and commercial interests of one or two mid-west cities intended to stampede this year's House of Delegates into changing the place of meeting from San Francisco. The California delegates promptly let the word go out that such an action was not within the power of this year's House; and the movement, while not absolutely quashed, found no spokesman who dared give expression to the plan